AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of configuring a node for virtual private network operation, comprising:

determining virtual private network settings associated with the node and at least one remote device;

formatting the virtual private network settings in a universal plug and play message format; and

providing the universal plug and play message, including information about the virtual private network settings, to the node over a network ~~virtual private network settings to the node in a common format for automatic exchange of information between networked devices~~ .

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein providing includes:

receiving at a gateway device a universal plug and play request from the node, the requesting being formatted using extensible markup language protocol;

determining whether a virtual private network tunnel is available for the node from which the universal plug and play request was received; and

if a virtual private network tunnel is available for that node, transmitting the settings to the node over a private network using an Internet Protocol address associated with the node.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, further comprising transmitting a message from a virtual private network repository node coupled to the private network to the node informing the node that virtual private network settings are available for downloading from the virtual private network repository node.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, further comprising requesting download of the virtual private network settings to the node.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, further comprising confirming that the requesting node is authorized to operate on the virtual private network.

7. (Currently Amended) A virtual private network gateway, comprising:

a communication adaptor coupled to a network; and

a processor coupled to the communication adaptor to transmit virtual private network settings to another node coupled to the network in a common format for automatic exchange of information between networked devices, wherein the common format for automatic exchange of information between networked devices is universal plug and play.

8. (Original) The virtual private network gateway of claim 7, wherein the network is a private network.

9. (Original) The virtual private network gateway of claim 7, wherein the network is a local area network.

10. (Original) The virtual private network gateway of claim 7, wherein the network is a wide area network.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Original) The virtual private network gateway of claim 7, wherein the processor is further to transmit a message to the other node informing the other node that virtual private network information is available from the virtual private network gateway.

13. (Original) The virtual private network gateway of claim 7, wherein the processor is further to confirm that the other node is authorized to operate on the virtual private network.

14. (Currently Amended) A virtual private network gateway, comprising:

a communication adaptor coupled to a network;

a processor coupled to the communication adaptor to provide virtual private network settings to another node coupled to the network in a [[common]] universal plug and play format for automatic exchange of information between networked devices; and

a storage device coupled to the processor to contain the virtual private network settings.

15. (Original) The virtual private network gateway of claim 14, wherein the processor is to retrieved the virtual private network settings from the storage device and transmit the virtual private network settings to the other node automatically utilizing universal plug and play.

16. (Currently Amended) A virtual private network node, comprising:

a communication adaptor coupled to a network; and

a processor coupled to the communication adaptor to (1) receive virtual private network settings from another node coupled to the network in a common format for automatic exchange of information between networked devices, wherein the common format for automatic exchange of information between networked devices is universal plug and play, and (2) establish a virtual private network with a remote device in accordance with the received settings.

17. (Original) The virtual private network gateway of claim 16, wherein the network is a local area network.

18. (Original) The virtual private network gateway of claim 16, wherein the network is a wide area network.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Currently Amended) The virtual private network gateway of claim 16, wherein the processor is further to transmit a universal plug and play message to the other node requesting that virtual private network information be downloaded.

21-26. (Canceled)